

March 13, 2009

WASHINGTON, DC—On March 11, 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law the 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Bill. Included within it were provisions for the 7th District, which funded programs from domestic abuse prevention to support for children with autism within the District. While Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) is pleased these worthy and responsible projects will receive necessary funding, he reiterated his commitment to reforming the appropriations process. Congressman Sestak has always been a strong proponent of increasing transparency and accountability in government. He has taken strong steps on his own in order to do so, and he actively supports eliminating earmarks from the appropriations process with a transition to a grant system.

“As I have often stated, I support eliminating all earmarks from the appropriations process entirely and would do so in a heartbeat, instituting in its place a grant system that takes account of local input in Washington,” said Congressman Sestak. “We should institute a process like the Homeland Security appropriations legislation, where instead of earmarking appropriation requests, Congress dedicates funding for competitive grants, like the FEMA Assistance to Firefighter Grant program where fire companies from around the country submit projects that are then reviewed by other firefighters to determine which projects get funded. By eliminating earmarks we can ensure that political influence is removed from the process, and by enhancing the grant programs we can also ensure that local business, community, and municipal leaders—who understand better than Washington bureaucrats a number of specific needs and challenges of their communities—have the proper input in allocating a certain proportion of federal funds within a fair and open, non-political grant process. Not only should the earmarking funds be moved into grants, but I feel strongly that the grants process should be made easier to access. That’s why I have created two grants manuals specifically for the 7th District to guide our companies, organizations, institutions, and municipalities in the competitive grant procedure, and why I’ve held six grant forums for all municipalities, first responders, organizations, and individuals.”

On his own initiative to enhance transparency and accountability, Congressman Sestak has each year published on his Web site and distributed to the media the details of all appropriations he has helped secure for the 7th District, which includes who has gotten the funding and how much. Congressman Sestak employs a four-step review process to ensure that all appropriations requests that receive his support are worthwhile, responsible, and will be of significant value to the 7th District and the nation. In order to be considered, appropriations requests must bolster one of the Congressman’s 5 Pillars of National Security: Economic, Defense, Health, Education, and Energy and Environmental Security. Furthermore, the Congressman selectively visits the recipients of funding after one year to ensure that taxpayer money is being spent properly and effectively.

Congressman Sestak also submitted ethics legislation that would have created an independent ethics review body made up of non-members of Congress and would have allowed individuals and outside groups to submit ethics complaints. Additionally, though it is not required, it is the Congressman's practice to decline campaign contributions from senior company officials during the appropriations period when their companies have appropriations requests before him, and he has returned thousands of dollars of contributions that have conflicted with this policy. Admittedly imperfect, this practice is one step in the Congressman's broader effort to restore accountability and transparency to government.

This year, Congressman Sestak will take the additional step of posting all projects that he submits with the dollar amount requested the day he submits them to the Appropriations Committee. He will also, as he has done each year, sign a disclosure form that identifies each project, the entity that will receive the funds and their address, what the earmark does, and a certification that neither the Congressman nor his wife will benefit from it financially.

While a proponent of eliminating earmarks outright, Congressman Sestak does support steps recently announced by Congress to increase transparency and cut down on earmark spending, while working to move earmark spending over to a grant process. These include:

- **Early Public Disclosure of Subcommittee Decisions:** Each bill must be accompanied by a list identifying each earmark that it includes and which member requested it. To increase the time available for public scrutiny of committee decisions, earmark disclosure tables will be made publically available the same day as the House or Senate Subcommittee rather than Full Committee reports their bill.
- **A Cap of 1%:** Total funding for non-project based earmarks will be limited to 50% of the 2006 levels and no more than 1% of the total discretionary budget.

He also commended steps take by the Obama Administration. President Obama announced this week two additional reforms to the earmark process:

- **Increased Executive Branch Review:** When a Member submits a request for an earmark, the appropriate Executive Branch agency will be given 20 days to review the project to ensure that the earmark is eligible to receive funds and meets goals established in law.
- **Competitive Selection Required of Earmark Funding Directed to For-Profits:** For any earmark intended to be directed to a for-profit entity, the Executive Branch will be required to ensure that the earmark will be awarded through a competitive bidding process.

"I am encouraged by the steps that are being taken to improve the appropriations process," the Congressman continued, "and I look forward to granting my full support to even further reforms that will make the system as transparent and accountable to the American people as possible to restore the public faith in Congress and the federal government. I am pleased, however, that under the current system, necessary, responsible, and very promising projects, institutions, and organizations—from a center for victims of domestic abuse to support for children with autism—will receive the funding they need to create jobs, foster health and education, and

improve the communities of the 7th District.”

Below are all of the appropriations for the 7th District that Congressman Sestak helped secure through the 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, broken down by the Pillars of National Security. Please note that Defense appropriations were funded last year, and were then accompanied by a press release from the Congressman detailing his appropriations.

7th District Projects Funded by the 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Bill

HEALTH SECURITY

- \$300,000 for the Weed and Seed of Upper Darby Township’s Center for Family Safety. This is a continuation of last year’s funding - To provide education and support services for families in particular women and children (primarily immigrant) in crisis, who find their safety at risk due to domestic violence. This would include emergency temporary shelter, language assistance and legal services. Due to the diversity in this area cultural parameters are often a barrier to women and children seeking help.
- \$250,000 for Widener University’s Delaware County Violence Prevention Collaborative. The Delaware County Violence Prevention Collaborative began in the fall of 2004 as part of a joint project between Widener University and the Crozer-Chester Health Systems to address significant concerns in the community. The Collaborative is made up of volunteer staff from both institutions, as well as representatives from approximately 30 community agencies, including Chester and Upper Darby Police Departments, the Delaware County Office of Behavioral Health, the Delaware County Juvenile and District Courts, the Domestic Abuse Project, schools, social service agencies, grassroots organizations, and the City of Chester Anti-Violence Initiative.
- \$100,000 to the Chester County, PA District Attorney’s Office for their Crime Scene and Evidence Tracking Project. This will allow for increased efficiencies from this smart card technology via tracking and cataloging of evidence.
- \$65,000 for the Westtown-East Goshen Regional Police Department for In Car Digital Video Systems. The In-Car digital video system is a system that records (both audio and video) pursuit operations, erratic driving situations, and actual police traffic stop activities. It can be used to collect evidence during pursuit operations or potential DUI erratic driving patterns as well as recording officer and suspect behavior during stop and/or arrest situations. It will also be a valuable training resource.
- \$25,000 for the Westtown-East Goshen Regional Police Department to fund License Plate Scanners. The License Plate Scanner is a device that uses small infrared cameras mounted on a police car to automatically scan license plates and match the numbers against databases of stolen vehicles, vehicles used in criminal activity, and vehicles whose owners have had their driver’s licenses suspended or revoked. The readers let Officers scan about 75 times more plates during an eight hour shift than the traditional method: writing down numbers and running them past a dispatcher.
- \$428,000 for a New Inpatient Building for Chester County Hospital. This new facility will add 72 inpatient beds and will allow the hospital to centralize and update all of its surgical facilities and services.

EDUCATION SECURITY

- \$50,000 for Valley Forge Military Academy and College for their Cadet Training in Science and Mathematics at Valley Forge Military College. This project will focus on necessary upgrades to the facilities, technology, equipment and supplies associated with the science and mathematics curriculum at VFMC that includes areas of concentration in the associate of science degree program -- pre-engineering, biological sciences, life sciences, and physical sciences. VFMC will pilot an innovative program geared to the strategic development of distinct cohorts of students (women cadets; Early Commissioning Program cadets for the U.S. Army; and qualified seniors from Valley Forge Military Academy taking college courses) in order to accelerate and individualize learning opportunities in these demanding academic disciplines.
- \$133,000 for Cheyney University's Campus Infrastructure Upgrade and Wireless project. Cheyney University is the only school in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education that does not have wireless access. The project will also allow the university to develop its first online distance education courses, certificate and degree programs.
- \$57,000 for Child Guidance Resource Center's Therapeutic After School Services for Children and Youth with Autism/Extended School Year Program Site Upgrades. Therapeutic After School Services for children and youth with Autism are provided Monday through Friday, 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Children age five to nine attend on Tuesdays and Thursdays, children age nine to 12 attend on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and youth age 13 – 21, separated into two groups, attend on all five days. A total of 71 children and youth attend the program.
- \$475,750 for Cheyney University Curriculum and Infrastructure Enhancement in STEM (CUCIES). This project will: (1) enhance Cheyney University's STEM infrastructure and capacity; (2) increase the number of Cheyney graduates in the STEM disciplines, particularly in environmental science and environmental engineering; and (3) expand the offerings and activities of our Center for Biotechnology and Applied Sciences. The objectives of this project are in keeping with Cheyney University's Strategic Plan, "Pathways to Greatness: 2004 and Beyond."
- \$95,000 for Neumann College's Workforce Education Initiative at Franklin Commons, Phoenixville, PA. This will help fund a collaborative partnership with the community of Phoenixville, PA, to provide educational programming for adult learners to meet urgent workforce needs in a two-county area that is experiencing economic, social and educational transition. Specifically, Neumann will offer a degree in Health Care Administration that includes emphasis on administration of long-term care and senior care institutions; and will establish an entry-level doctoral program in pharmacy and undergraduate and graduate programming in Pharmaceutical Supply Chain Management.
- \$190,000 for Pedestrian and School Children Safety Project in Marple Township to provide safe corridors for school children and pedestrians by providing public safety improvements and enhancements.
- \$190,000 for the Chester County Historical Society's Community Outreach Initiative. The initiative will have numerous benefits. Scholarships to poorer school districts will enable more children to participate in educational programming. School children will be inspired by new programs on the Lenape Indians and Immigration from 17th Century through today, and teachers will be able to use these programs to enhance their curricula. Moreover, by posting lesson plans and other materials on our website, more teachers will be able to access our

services. By reaching out to underserved constituencies in the community through cultural events and strategic partnerships, more individuals will be introduced to CCHS and utilize their services.

- \$2,200,000 for the Thurgood Marshall College Fund's NASA Minority Science Initiative.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

- \$237,500 for US 422 River Crossing Complex Project for the Greater Valley Forge Transportation Management Association to use for reconstruction of US 422 and its interchanges with PA 23 and PA 363 and its Schuylkill River bridges.
- \$166,250 for Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia for land development and construction of a community center in Radnor Township
- \$380,00 for Buses and Bus Facilities: 69th Street Terminal Parking Facility, Upper Darby as part of the township's Gateway initiative.
- \$300,000 for Delaware County Community College: for a small business solutions center.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

- \$120,000 for evaluation of alternatives to address flood damage reduction, environmental restoration, and other allied purpose. Watershed—scale assessments will determine specific underlying causes of problems and identify appropriation methods for immediate and long term solutions for watersheds in the Pennsylvania 7th Congressional District by the Army Corps of Engineers.
- \$1 million for The Friends of Valley Forge Park's project to rehabilitate two buildings at the Welcome Center at Valley Forge National Historical Park. This will, 1) enable far more efficient and effective visitor orientation, 2) provide adequate visitor and resource protection, and 3) consolidate office space from several locations to reduce costs and impacts on historic structures.
- \$200,000 for Borough of Bridgeport's Phase II of its Combined Sewer System project. Phase II will involve the construction of separate sewer systems or other measures to better control floatables and discharges during wet weather events.

Note: Copy corrected April 6, 2009.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.